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C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 000083

EUR/SCE (SHIRATORI AND TOMLYANOVICH), AND NEA/MAG (MHAYES)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [AORC](#) [ICJ](#) [KV](#) [TS](#)

SUBJECT: TUNISIA: NO DECISION YET ON KOVOSO RECOGNITION

REF: A. STATE 11928

[1](#)B. 08 TUNIS 194

[1](#)C. 08 TUNIS 158

[1](#)D. 08 TUNIS 151

[1](#)E. 08 TUNIS 84

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Ambassador delivered Ref A demarche at a February 10 meeting with MFA Chief of Staff Mahmoud Khemiri. Khemiri, who was joined by Special Assistant to the Minister Mehrez Ben Rouma, was visibly uncomfortable in discussing the topic. He offered no substantive reply, other than to confirm that the GOT has made no decision yet on the issue.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: The Foreign Minister exerts strict control over all diplomatic exchanges. Thus, Khemiri's discomfort probably stemmed as much from the fact that he did not have instructions from which to respond to the Ambassador's points as it did from GOT reluctance to be out in front on this issue. When we have raised this issue in the past (Refs B-D), the GOT has consistently signaled that recognition would be "difficult." GOT representatives have also made clear that Tunisia will take its lead from neighboring states and other groups to which it belongs, i.e., the Arab League and the OIC.

Please visit Embassy Tunis' Classified Website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/tunis/index.cfm>

Godec